



**TESTIMONY FOR H.B. No. 6824:
An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017,
And Making Appropriations Therefore And Other Provisions Related To Revenue**

Submitted By: **Ciro Anthony Massa, Psy.D, LCSW, LADC,**
Senior Director of Clinical Services/Clinical Advisor
Catholic Charities, Inc. - Archdiocese of Hartford
To the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health

Public Hearing Date: March 6, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dr. **Ciro Anthony Massa**, Senior Director of Clinical Services/Clinical Advisor at Catholic Charities, Inc. Archdiocese of Hartford. Catholic Charities is a social services organization which provides services to over 26,000 individuals and families without regard to race, religion, or economic circumstances each year. The agency offers human services across 33 sites in the Hartford, Litchfield, and New Haven counties. A wide range of human services offered by the agency include: Outpatient Behavioral Health programs for families and children with significant mental illness and substance use disorders.

I urgently request your assistance in appropriating necessary funds to adequately fund mental health and addiction services. The proposed budget will dramatically and negatively impact the well being of our community by inadequately funding DMHAS' grants for Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment. These grant accounts experienced a reduction of more than \$25M in the last biennial budget. Although they appear to be funded at the same level as the FY 15 budget, this actually represents a cut, as there is no indication of ongoing supplementary funding that was provided by the DMHAS and from the Tobacco Trust Fund, which totaled \$20M last year.

Without appropriate funding of these grants, providers of behavioral health services will be forced to close programs or drastically reduce services. This will result in staff reductions, waiting lists and reduction or elimination of highest demand interventions such as psychiatric care and medication therapies. Critical services, such as outpatient programs, will no longer be available to maintain some of the most in-need clients in the community.

Individuals and families in need of critical behavioral health services do not simply disappear if care is no longer available. Instead, they may seek exponentially more expensive services in emergency departments or worse, not at all. They may end up in jail, become homeless, or become a danger to themselves or others.

At a time when access to behavioral health treatment in CT seems essential, Catholic Charities will lose at least \$334,000 in funding and this would mean that 700 individuals referred to us will not receive care and treatment.

Please address this dire situation by adequately funding DMHAS' grants for Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Contact information: **Ciro Anthony Massa, Psy.D, LCSW, LADC**, Senior Director of Clinical Services/Clinical Advisor, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford, 45 Wadsworth Street, Hartford, CT 06106, 860-527-1124, drcmassa@ccaoh.org